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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 November 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Busacca ..... (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 112: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.49)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.44, L.45, L.46, L.47, L.48, L.51, L.52 and L.53)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.54)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.49: Fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1. **Ms. Wronecka** (Poland), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.49 on behalf of the original sponsors and Israel, Liechtenstein and Moldova, said that the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was an appropriate opportunity to review five decades of achievements and failures and further spread the Declaration's universal message. Recognition of the diversity of the world's historical, cultural and religious traditions should be a source of strengthened determination in efforts to promote, in a spirit of tolerance, the value of human dignity. The anniversary should be an occasion to identify obstacles to be overcome in order to achieve the objective, universal respect for the rights of all individuals. In order to help Governments to comply with their obligations, further international cooperation was indispensable among equal partners. The international community should be concerned with human rights violations wherever they occurred.

2. The aim of the draft resolution was to initiate a comprehensive programme of preparations involving all the relevant actors and components of the United Nations system. Her delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

3. **Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez** (Dominican Republic) said that draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.49 should refer to all the human rights of all people and therefore proposed that the phrase "for all" should be inserted after the phrase "all human rights and fundamental freedoms" in the final preambular paragraph and in paragraphs 2, 8 and 9. Such an amendment would further strengthen the wording of the draft resolution, which her delegation would then sponsor.

4. **The Chairman** suggested that the representative of the Dominican Republic should confer with the representative of Poland with regard to the proposed amendment.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.44: Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes

5. **Mr. Ferrer Rodriguez** (Cuba) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.44 on behalf of the original sponsors and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The draft text, which was based on essential principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, recognized that the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of any State should be respected in the holding of elections, reaffirmed that it was the concern solely of peoples to determine methods and to establish institutions regarding the electoral process, and reiterated that all peoples had the right, freely and without external interference, to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It was hoped that the draft resolution would be supported, as its predecessors had been at previous sessions, by the majority of Member States.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.45: Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization

6. **Ms. Shestak** (United States of America) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.45 on behalf of the original sponsors, joined by Andorra, Chile, Greece, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Micronesia, Mongolia, Panama, Philippines, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Solomon Islands and Uzbekistan. While the draft text was based on previous resolutions on that item, a number of new elements had been included. The importance of respect for the results of elections that had been verified as free and fair was underlined. Reference was made to the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held in Romania in September 1997. The draft resolution encouraged the Secretary-General, through the Electoral Assistance Division, to respond to the evolving nature of requests for assistance and the growing need for specific types of medium-term expert assistance. A number of paragraphs underscored the fact that United Nations electoral assistance was given only when requested by the recipient Member State. Her delegation

hoped that it would be possible to achieve a consensus on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.46: Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

7. **Mr. Alaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.46 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the text was essentially the same as that of its predecessor at the previous session. The underlying reason for submitting the draft resolution was the fact that the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in an increasing number of developing countries had reached alarming proportions and had had adverse economic, social and cultural effects. The sponsors strongly believed that the General Assembly should continue its endeavours to protect those rights. In view of the importance of the question under consideration, it was hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.47: Respect for the right to universal freedom of travel and the vital importance of family reunification

8. **Mr. Ferrer Rodriguez** (Cuba), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.47, said that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons who decided to emigrate, including the right to family reunification, should continue to be given priority in the formulation of national and international policies. The draft resolution reaffirmed that all Governments must recognize the vital importance of family reunification and called upon all States to refrain from enacting legislation intended as a coercive measure that discriminated against individuals or groups of legal migrants. The draft text was similar to the resolutions adopted at previous sessions on that question and it was hoped that it would be supported by the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.48: Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

9. **Mr. McDonald** (Ireland) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.48 on behalf of the original sponsors and the Czech Republic, Mauritius and Slovenia. There was ample evidence that religious intolerance remained a reality in many parts of the world. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief detailed egregious violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief and demonstrated the degree to which that most fundamental human right continued to be breached. All Governments should assist the Special Rapporteur fully in the discharge of his mandate. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. In that way, the international community would underscore its determination to ensure freedom of religion or belief.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.51: Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

10. **Ms. Schiefermair** (Austria), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.51 on behalf of the original sponsors and Romania, said that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contributed to peace and stability and enriched the cultural heritage of society as a whole. The draft resolution acknowledged the important role of the United Nations in that context and welcomed the activities undertaken within the framework of the inter-agency consultation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights were called upon to continue to give attention to situations involving minorities. In order to streamline the work of the Third Committee and in view of the important role of the Working Group on Minorities, her delegation had decided to biennialize consideration of the resolution on that question in the General Assembly. In paragraph 14, the words "and continue to hold one session annually" had been deleted. It was hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.52: Human rights in the administration of justice

11. **Ms. Schiefermair** (Austria) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.52 on behalf of the original sponsors, joined by the Czech Republic and Liechtenstein. The draft text focused on existing human rights standards in the administration of justice, especially with regard to juveniles in detention. It welcomed the work of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in that area and emphasized the need for close coordination of their activities relating to the administration of justice. It was hoped that the draft resolution would again be supported by many delegations from all regions.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.53: Strengthening of the rule of law

12. **Mr. Neiva Tavares** (Brazil) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.53 on behalf of the original sponsors, joined by Mongolia and Samoa. The draft text updated General Assembly resolution 51/96 and was basically

intended to provide guidance to the High Commissioner for Human Rights on how to proceed in implementing the relevant recommendations set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The text affirmed the role of the High Commissioner as the focal point for coordinating system-wide attention to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It was hoped that, as in previous years, the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.54: Human rights in Haiti

13. **Ms. Duran** (Venezuela), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.54 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the aim of the draft resolution was to recognize the efforts of the Government of Haiti to improve the human rights situation in that country as a result of the consolidation of its democratic institutions, and the work in that regard carried out by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Haiti and the independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights. The international community was invited to continue its involvement in the reconstruction and development of Haiti, having regard to the fragility of the political, social and economic situation of the country. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted, as in previous years, without a vote.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.